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The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

DURHAM REGION ANTI-RACISM TASKFORCE

Thursday, June 26, 2025

A meeting of the Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce was held on Thursday, June 26, 2025 in Meeting Room 1-B, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Ontario at 7:02 PM. Electronic participation was offered for this meeting.

1. Traditional Territory Acknowledgment

Chair Samuel read the following land acknowledgement:

The Region of Durham exists on lands that the Michi Saagiig Anishinaabeg inhabited for thousands of years prior to European colonization. These lands are the traditional and treaty territories of the Nations covered under the Williams Treaties, including the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, Alderville First Nation, Hiawatha First Nation, Curve Lake First Nation, and the Chippewa Nations of Georgina Island, Beausoleil and Rama.

We honour, recognize, and respect Indigenous Peoples as rights holders and stewards of the lands and waters on which we have the privilege to live. In our efforts towards reconciliation, we continue to build and strengthen relationships with First Nations, as well as the growing Inuit communities and large Métis communities here in Durham. We commit to learning from Indigenous values and knowledge, building opportunities for collaboration, and recognizing that we are all connected.

2. Roll Call

Present: S. Bookal, Community Member
PG Case, Industry/Association/Public Institution Representative, Vice-Chair
R. Coelho*, Community Member
A. Frempong, Community Member
Councillor Lee, Regional Council
J. Munawa, Community Member
B. Nelson, Industry/Association/Public Institution Representative
N. Samuel, Industry/Association/Public Institution Representative, Chair
Councillor Shahid, Regional Council
J. Williamson, Industry/Association/Public Institution Representative
G. Wilson-Beier, Community Member
*** denotes members participating electronically**

Also

Present: Councillor Anderson*, Regional Council Alternate

Absent: E. Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer

Staff

Present: K. Allore-Engel, Manager, Community Safety and Well-Being, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
A. Hector-Alexander, Director, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
P. Hines, Manager, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
A. Sharma, Policy Advisor, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT
V. Walker, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services

3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by Councillor Shahid, Seconded by S. Bookal,
That the minutes of the Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce meeting
held on Thursday, May 22, 2025, be adopted.
CARRIED

5. Delegations

There were no delegations to be heard.

6. Presentations

A) Kiersten Allore-Engel, Manager, Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB), Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Regional Municipality of Durham, re: CSWB Violence Prevention and Intervention Activities

Kiersten Allore-Engel, Manager, Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB), Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Regional Municipality of Durham, provided a PowerPoint presentation with regards to CSWB Violence Prevention and Intervention Activities.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan
 - Mental Health
 - Substance Use
 - Criminal Involvement
 - Social Isolation
 - Victimization
 - Homelessness and Basic Needs
 - Experiences of Racism

- CSWB Context
- Four Levels of Risk Mitigation
- Cost Benefits of CSWB Planning
- Current Violence Prevention and Intervention Initiatives
- Violence Interruption
 - Murray McKinnon Foundation
- Violence Intervention
 - Durham Community Action Group
 - Ifarada Institute
- Violence Prevention
 - Afiwi Groove School
 - Durham Family Cultural Centre
 - First Nations
 - Micro-Grants

K. Allore-Engel responded to questions from the Committee regarding whether any overlap exists between the programs; how the success rate of the programs are measured; the total amount of grant funding available through the micro-grants program, and which level of government is providing the funding; whether Durham Region Police Services (DRPS) has an association with any of the programs; whether any connections exist between program partners and the Youth in Policing (YIP) program; whether a presentation will be delivered to any school boards in the Region to connect students with appropriate programming; whether any of the program partners assist racialized youth with attaining relevant certifications to support successful job placement; the potential impacts that Bill 33: Supporting Children and Students Act, 2025, as proposed, may have on programming as it relates to mandated police access in schools; and strategies to support youth navigating the court system.

Discussion ensued with regards to the importance of connecting teachers and school staff with the necessary supports and resources to respond to the needs of students and connect them to appropriate programs to support their development and success; the essential role that community engagement plays in achieving that objective; the existing barriers that deters individuals from seeking relevant support services; and the partnerships that school boards have with various mental health service providers.

7. Information Items

There were no information items.

8. Discussion Items

A) Emancipation Day Celebrations

P. Hines stated that the Region is hosting an Emancipation Day event on July 30th from 4:00 to 7:00 PM at the Esplanade Park in Pickering. She advised that the theme of the event is “Rooted in Resilience: Embracing Empowerment” and outlined the event programming which will include an educational component, speeches, activities for children, and celebratory festivities. P. Hines noted that the Ajax Anti-Racism Taskforce and Pickering Anti-Black Racism Taskforce will be present at the event and stated that representation from the DRART is recommended and would strengthen its visibility within the community.

P. Hines advised that there will not be a dedicated entry point to the event but road blockages will be in place as part of a new security protocol established by the City of Pickering.

P. Hines responded to questions from the Committee with regards to food vendors; whether there will be a controlled gate entry; whether tents will be available for event partners; how the Committee can contribute to the event; whether information relating to this event will be shared with the other diversity committees in the Region; and whether there is an opportunity for Durham Region Transit (DRT) to provide transit services to the event for newcomers to the Region and shelter residents.

B) Community-based Hate Reporting

A. Sharma provided an overview of Council’s recent direction to staff to investigate the development of a framework for sharing incidences of hate with relevant human rights organizations, and the subsequent research activities undertaken by staff to explore suitable approaches to fulfil the directive. She advised that staff concluded there is a larger role they can play in the collection of data relating to hate-motivated incidents, which will drive the development of a community-based hate reporting program. A. Sharma explained the framework of the program draws on models used in other municipalities where Victim Services is the dedicated first point of contact for reporting due to their staff being trained in trauma response and their ability to provide appropriate supports.

A. Sharma stated that a two-year pilot project for the community-based hate reporting program has been approved by the Finance and Administration Committee and Council and advised that next steps include building out the program, with specific timelines and benchmarks to be determined. A. Hector-Alexander added that the first phase of the project will be funded through the Community Safety and Well-Being Fund.

A. Sharma shared samples of the posters that were publicized as part of Mississauga’s anti-hate campaign that features the tagline “Embrace and Celebrate our Diversity”, as examples of how this project may be promoted.

A. Hector-Alexander and A. Sharma responded to questions from the Committee with regards to whether the referenced community partners have already been

engaged in discussions or will be engaged as the project progresses; potential risks and outcomes associated with data transfer to police services or third party organizations; effective communication strategies to explain the process to the community to encourage more individuals to report incidences of hate; and whether consideration has been given to offering mediation services to repair or restore relationships in the community affected by adversity.

Discussion ensued regarding the reasons for hate motivated incidences being underreported; the importance of incorporating an educational element to support the program's goals and long-term impact; the benefit of collecting and reporting related data at community events to generate useful insights; and the perceived connection one may make between Victim Services and law enforcement that may deter individuals from reporting hate activity.

C) Community Connections

A. Hector-Alexander stated that the Region's first community connections event was a success and effectively provided a space for communities to come together and share experiences and ideas. She advised that the event generated interest in organizing future gatherings.

A. Hector-Alexander responded to a question from the Committee with regards to whether other diversity committees were invited to attend the event.

General discussion ensued with members providing positive feedback about the event; and suggestions for strategic direction for future events, including promotional strategies, expanding on educational elements, and approaches to building collaborative networks in the community.

D) Subcommittee Updates

1. EDI Working Group

A. Frempong provided an update on behalf of the EDI Working Group and stated that a survey was recently sent out to various community partners and Committee members to collect information as part of the coalition building phase of the Together Against Hate Campaign. She advised that monthly meetings will take place with coalition partners, with the first meeting scheduled for July 9th at 10:00 AM. A. Frempong emphasized the importance of having representation from the DRART at these meetings and encouraged members to participate.

P. Hines added that the survey contains essential information that will guide the coalition and provide insights to guide next steps. She stated that responses from some community partners have not been received and suggested if any members have direct contacts within any of these organizations, that may assist with obtaining additional responses.

P. Hines responded to questions from the Committee with regards to the timing of the event; whether the event will be held in a virtual format; and whether specific deliverables are expected as a condition of the funding allocation.

2. DRPS Working Group

S. Bookal provided an update with regards to the DRPS Working Group and advised that the staffing changes within the DRPS leadership team have concluded. She stated that Deputy Chief Kirkpatrick will now be responsible for overseeing the Diversity Advisory Committee (DAC) and advised that the Working Group's monthly meetings with DRPS will likely take place with Deputy Chief Kirkpatrick going forward.

S. Bookal also noted that Jill Locke has been assigned as the Inspector for the Equity and Inclusion Unit, and Mark Pillman has been assigned as the Staff Sergeant.

3. School Board Working Group

There were no new updates from the School Board Working Group.

4. Education Working Group

There were no new updates from the Education Working Group

9. **Other Business**

A) Canadian Race Relations Foundation Fund

A. Frempong announced that the Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF) recently invited community partners in the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA) to attend a community development day to engage in dialogue relating to anti-hate strategies and initiatives across the province. She advised that she submitted an application on behalf of the Committee, and two members of the Committee have been accepted to attend the event, which will take place virtually on July 11 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. A. Frempong further advised that due to scheduling conflicts, she is unable to attend the event and inquired whether any members would be available to participate.

A. Sharma added that the CRRF is accepting applications from organizations that are planning and implementing anti-racism projects and stated that expressions of interest that identify an anti-racism initiative can be submitted up to August 29th.

B) Whitby MP Ryan Turnbull's Pre-Canada Day BBQ

S. Bookal stated that Whitby MP Ryan Turnbull is hosting a Pre-Canada Day BBQ on June 28th at Cullen Central Park in Whitby. She suggested this may be an opportunity to show support and network and encouraged members to attend.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce meeting will be held on Thursday, September 25, 2025 at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby.

11. Adjournment

Moved by Councillor Lee, Seconded by Councillor Shahid,
That the meeting be adjourned.
CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM

Respectfully submitted,

N. Samuel, Chair

V. Walker, Committee Clerk